

Sketch

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Formation Flying

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Formation Flying

Velda Brickler

Abstract

Winging along in the wake of a ship Dipping . . . Soaring . . . Gliding...

You wouldn't kill that mouse we caught one morning, remember—you turned him loose outside instead. Then Slim—six foot four. They say you had to leave home because the big boys ran you off. Well, good luck. And then Dead Pan, cold blue eyes and poker face. You carried your arm in a sling for weeks, and both blue eyes were black. And you, and you, the Golddust twins—I thought I was seeing double the first night you came through the line. But then I suppose you enjoy confusing people. And the Rear Guard—last, of course—the football team and the boys who played in the marching band. Always, nearly late for evening chow, you rushed in, red-faced and winded, with a breath of cool air clinging around you. But I see you made your train on time.

You're all aboard now. The loaded cars rock gently as the train begins to roll again, and slides out into darkness, leaving the station in the dusty, yellow light.

You are gone—like the color-painted leaves that fall. . . Brown, ragged things in sodden heaps, inert before the wind.

Formation Flying

(Dedicated to "Skipper" who is flying somewhere up there)

Velda Brickler

Winging along in the wake of a ship

Dipping . . .

Soaring . . .

Gliding

Gleaming ghost-like in thick swirls of gray mist

Now silver . . .

Now distant . . .

Now clear

Plummeting down to the tip of a sleeve

First sighting . . .

Then slipping . . .

And firing

Banking in circles that narrow and cease

Sailing . . .

Settling . . .

Safe